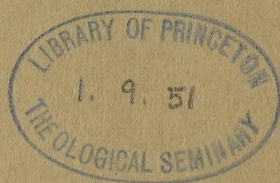


Herbert Pierrepont
Houghton

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Amharic Verb in Comparison
with Ethiopic

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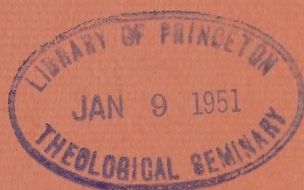
HERBERT PIERREPONT HOUGHTON



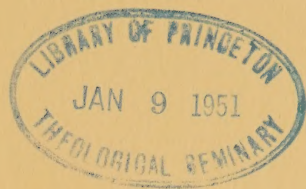
SECOND EDITION

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Northfield, Minnesota

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HERBERT PIERREPONT HOUGHTON
Professor of Greek in Carleton College



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Of all the languages of Eastern Africa of whatever origin, Amharic stands today in the front rank as the leading language. It is spoken all the way from Upper Egypt to the Equator. It serves as the official medium of the recently restored Kingdom of Ethiopia, and is developing a varied, modern literature.

PREFACE

A second edition of this treatise having been called for, the writer has availed himself of the opportunity to correct typographical oversights, to expand some explanations and to recast several statements. This new edition is printed in Garamond type on India eggshell paper; the addition of a cover, it is hoped, has improved the general appearance and format. The cover is purposely of a roseate hue resembling one of the shades used in the flag of Ethiopia, the country of which Amharic is the official language.

—H. P. H.

By the same writer:

THE BASQUE VERB: GUIPUZCOAN DIALECT,
1944

LANGUAGES OF THE CAUCASUS: K'ART'VELIAN,
1946

THE COPTIC VERB: BOHAIRIC DIALECT,
1948

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¹A prized possession of the writer of this monograph.

²Unfortunately, Part II, which was to have contained a translation of the text, with commentary, has not been published.

COMMENTS ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The work by Franz Praetorius: *Die Amharische Sprache*, is a fundamental presentation of the grammar. It contains etymological comparisons with Ge'ez and Tigrña. It ranks as the first great grammar of the Amharic, and is indispensable for the serious student of the language.

Guidi's *Grammatica elementare della lingua amarica* is an excellent book that has passed through many editions since it first appeared in 1889. It furnishes a complete résumé of the language, and presents very few details requiring correction. It is ideal for the beginner.

Afevork's *Grammatica*, apparently translated into Italian from the original Amharic, is the first work of this kind appearing from the pen of a native of Ethiopia. It is very rich in studies of all kinds.

The great work on the Amharic Verb by Afevork entitled, *Il verbo Amarico* (Roma 1911) gives a more detailed account of the verbal forms. Unfortunately the portion of the book announced as dealing with the usages of the verb, has not been published.

Armbruster's *Grammar* with a Latin title: *Initia Amharica* (although written in English) is fairly brief but excellent, and contains an exceedingly ample list of more than 850 verbs and their nine principal tenses, phonetically transcribed.

TABLE OF SOUNDS

The transliteration of the Ethiopic characters, together with the additional Amharic sounds, as employed in this monograph—insofar as they differ from obvious English, is as follows:

a = a as in back
â = a as in far
c = ch as in check
e = e as in fête
g is always hard as in gone
i = i as in since
î = i as in machine
j = English j or soft g as in gem
o is always long, as in tone
q = the same sound as k
u is always long, a double o, in moon

h is a harder sound of h
t is a sound of t followed by a slight sound of h
s is more hissing than ordinary s
š is sh as in short
y sometimes has the sound as in yet; or it may
 be long i, as machine, when used initially

ñ is the same as Spanish ñ in cañon, a y sound.
 The sign of the rough breathing ' indicates a harsh
 palatal *h*.
 The sign of the smooth breathing ' indicates omission
 of sound, or a breath before, or between
 consonants.

zh is the combination heard in Russian: *muzhik*,
 a voiced *sh*. English *s* in leisure.

The consonants: *g*, *h*, *k*, and *q* when immediately
 followed by *u*, are so represented, and are pronounced
 as in the respective English combinations.

- I Position of Amharic
- II The Ethiopic Languages
- III Amharic Literary Tradition
- IV The Ethiopic Syllabary
- V The Amharic Verb
- VI The Ge'ez Verb for Comparison

ASPECTS OF THE AMHARIC VERB

I. POSITION OF AMHARIC

Apart from Babylonian-Assyrian—of which no modern descendant exists—the four principal Semitic languages are, obviously: 1) Arabic 2) Hebrew 3) Syriac 4) Ethiopic. In each of these there has appeared some great religious tractate, such as: the Quran, the Old Testament, the Syriac and Ethiopic Versions of Holy Scripture. Interesting it is to note that emanating from the first three mentioned, there are practically no divisions or derivatives other than a few dialectal peculiarities or differences of language usage due to the various fields of literature presented, for example, Rabbinical, or Biblical. Modern Arabic, of the best form, shows fewer changes from the language of the Quran than present day Greek exhibits in comparison with Homer. Hebrew is represented in modern speech by the Jüdisch and by spoken Hebrew in Palestine, but still the ancient speech abides, and its modern representatives cannot be regarded as separate languages. Present day Syrians speak a form of Arabic, while the ancient Syriac is still heard in religious ceremony.

Ethiopic languages present in this connection, a different aspect, or situation. Here obtains a notable deviation, in the matter of classification, from the three other great Semitic tongues. Differing as the Ethiopic languages do from the other three, in reading from left to right, instead of right to left; and in displaying a unique syllabary completely unknown to Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac and, furthermore, having no article,³ they might be categorized simply as the Ethiopic Languages⁴—a distinct group—were it not that congeners between these languages and the Semitic, par excellence, are everywhere apparent. Even in the matter of related roots, however, the modern tongues spoken in Ethiopia have gone a long way from parallel verb stems in,—for example,—Hebrew and Syriac. Needless to say, Ethiopic is more closely affiliated with Arabic, it being generally accepted that Ethiopia was settled from Arabia.

It seems possible, then, for purposes of comparison, to study "Ethiopic Languages" precisely as one may devote attention to Romance languages or Germanic languages within the great Indo-European family. Guidi (*Gram, della lingua amarica*, p. 1) opens his presentation of this language (Amharic) with the statement that it is a "Semitic language, and belongs to the same family as that to which belong Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, etc." This is an extremely loose statement and is similar to the possible assertion that French is an Indo-European language belonging to the same family as Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit. One does not think of French in connection with Persian, but immediately with Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. So in approaching Amharic, the historian of language might more accurately

³This also is true of Babylonian-Assyrian.

⁴Dillmann suggested "Arabic-African."

say: Amharic, is one of the chief languages of the Ethiopic branch of Semitic languages, and is closely akin to its sister languages now spoken in Ethiopia. Or, one may say: Amharic is a language of the Abyssinian branch of the great Semitic family. We prefer, however, to use the name Ethiopic languages and to classify them as follows:

I *The Northern Division*. This comprises the ancient *Ethiopic*, known as *Ge'ez*, not now a spoken tongue, but in use for many centuries down to the present time as a sacred and literary medium; and, secondly, the languages derived from *Ge'ez* and used today as vernaculars: the *Tigre*, and the *Tigrīña*. The former of these is spoken in and around Mensa and Habab; the latter in the province of Tigre and the neighboring regions.

II *The Southern Group*. This is formed of the Amharic, and also of a few other languages such as those of *Harar*, *Gurage* and *Gafat*. Guidi (*op. cit.* p. 2) thinks that "all of these languages and lesser dialects were derived probably from the ancient Semitic language of South Abyssinia, of which no written document remains."

The four chief Ethiopic languages: 1) *Ge'ez*, 2) Amharic, 3) *Tigre*, 4) *Tigrīña*, show many points of similarity. They all employ the same syllabary, called, usually, Ethiopic; they show resemblances in formation of words, vocabulary, sentence structure and verb forms. *Ge'ez* is undoubtedly the oldest, and has influenced the other three. Whether it may be said that they are derived from the *Ge'ez* or grew up parallel or a little subsequent in time cannot be categorically stated. It is usually agreed that *Tigre* and *Tigrīña* developed from *Ge'ez*; on the other hand, Amharic appears to be a sister language to *Ge'ez* (though later in developing) somewhat as Italian and Spanish, or perhaps better, Spanish and Portuguese are related. Of all the languages of Eastern Africa of whatever origin, Amharic today stands in the front rank as the leading language. It is spoken from Upper Egypt to the Equator, and serves as the official medium of the newly restored Kingdom of Ethiopia.

II. HISTORY OF ETHIOPIC LANGUAGES

Let us examine more closely the history of these languages.

Semitic peoples from very early times migrated from the Arabian peninsula into the Eastern portions of Africa south of Egypt. The later immigrants of Semitic race were endowed with superior qualities of mind, and showed marked advances in agriculture and commerce, in comparison with the indigenous inhabitants. As time passed, these Semites founded a state, independent from Arabia, known as the Kingdom of Aksum. Here was developed the earliest of Ethiopic languages, the *Ge'ez*, which became the official and literary language. The king and court of Aksum were converted to Christianity in the Fourth Century. During this, and the two or three following centuries, the two great rival powers of the Orient were the Persians and the Byzantines. The Kingdom of Aksum, having become Christian,

inclined naturally towards the Byzantine Empire, extended its power both North and East, and at one time controlled Yemen. But the Mohamadan conquest in the Seventh Century separated, completely, Aksum from the Byzantine Empire. Losing the Byzantine support, Aksum suffered a decadence. In the monasteries, however, there was still continuous literary activity down to the Twelfth Century; the center of culture was no longer in the North but moved southward. There was developed in the South, then, a new literary, and national language, rising to the top among several dialects, which became known as *Amharinña*.

This language, originating in the province of Amhara, gradually extended its boundaries in the Sixteenth Century, became the predominant spoken vernacular of Ethiopia, while Ge'ez still remained the standard, religious medium. More and more, as Amharic spread widely, it deviated from its antique forms, somewhat as Middle English—with Norman infiltration—tended to become more vernacular the farther it extended its use.

III. AMHARIC LITERARY TRADITION

The first documents of Amharic of the archaic period are the popular poems and songs in honor of the Kings of Abyssinia, dating from the Fourteenth Century. These poems, however, do not represent a real folk literature; they were apparently not regarded as of great importance, nor do they present a satisfactory delineation of the culture of the times.

The true literature of Amharic dates from the Sixteenth Century and from the beginning of the Seventeenth. The early writings of the Christian Orient—the Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian (Kartvelian) and almost wholly, also, the Syriac⁵—are devoted to the introduction of Christianity, or its defense in countries dominated by Islam, and not to the organic and progressive development of national literatures. In other words, not only was the purpose of these literatures obviously to extend Christianity but also, even more definitely, perhaps, to attack and defeat Moslemism.

So too, Amharic was developed with a religious intention, but not as opposed to Islam, but in order to combat within the Christian Faith itself, the pervasive entrance of a form of belief contrary to that of Ethiopians. Amharic literature was born to attack the Catholic propaganda of the 16th and 17th Centuries. The Jesuits, coming as missionaries into Ethiopia, at that time, composed, or translated, books of religious propaganda, rituals and prayers in the Amharic language. At first the Abyssinian clergy, zealous for their Monophysite⁶ confes-

⁵The Old Syriac Gospels, or *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe*, edited by Agnes Smith Lewis, London, Williams and Norgate, 1910.

⁶Since the Sixth Century, the Ethiopians have adhered to this doctrine of the Coptic Church, testifying that Our Lord possessed but "one nature." v. Worrell: *A Short Account of the Copts*.

sion of belief, opposed these Catholic doctrines by polemical attacks written in Ge'ez; but when Amharic gained importance as a spoken vernacular, it became increasingly necessary to follow the example of the Jesuits by employing Amharic to confute the undesirable doctrines. This endeavor proved to be the very core and beginning of a national Amharic literature.

The Abyssinian clergy composed, in Amharic, theological works mostly in the field of apologetics, such as: *A mada mestir*, containing the fundamentals of the Monophysite doctrine, the *Nagara Haymanot*, on Faith; and the *Terguamehu lasalactu bellaivehu la egziabeber*, on the doctrine of the Trinity. The Psalms and portions of the books of the Prophets were translated at this time, from versions in Ge'ez already in use. In the 17th Century there came into Amhara a German Lutheran missionary named Peter Heyling, for the purpose of introducing Lutheran, anti-Catholic propaganda. Due to his influence—since he, like the Monophysites, was inimical to the Catholic Faith—prayers, and portions of the New Testament—especially the Gospel of St. John—were rendered in the Amharic tongue.

The unfortunate political conditions prevailing in Abyssinia during the 18th and the first decades of the 19th Century, were not very favorable to the conscious development of a progressive literature. Nevertheless it was in the early part of the 19th Century that the major portion of the Holy Bible was translated into Amharic and published by the Bible Society in London. This was followed by the writing of various religious treatises in the native language by Protestant missionaries; also by the publication of several Catholic books—among them a translation of Thomas à Kempis: *The Imitation of Christ*. But these several productions, due wholly to foreign religious influence, cannot in any way be considered as the sequence or the development of the preceding national literature. A revival of the literature—but due to other causes, and under different direction from the preceding—came in towards the middle of the 19th Century thanks to the betterment of conditions in Abyssinia, as well as to the penetrating of European culture. Among historical works may be mentioned two chronicles concerning King Theodore⁷ one by Zanab; the other by Walda Maryam.

The writer of this monograph has been privileged in having access to the work here mentioned: *The Chronicle of King Theodore of Abyssinia*. The edition published in 1902 by the Library of Princeton University bears the name of the noted Semitist, Enno Littmann, who personally copied the text from the only existing MS in Berlin. The edition contains the text printed from the beautiful Amharic type fonts of the Casa Editrice Italiana. This "Chronicle" is of the greatest interest to Ethiopic students both in form and contents. It is one of the very few known texts in Amharic prose and thus furnishes, as

⁷v. Littman: *The Chronicle of King Theodore of Abyssinia*, Princeton, 1902.

Littman notes: "authentic material for the study of the language as actually spoken" and written. The story deals with the life of the *negus* Theodore the Second, and the events of his reign prior to the Anglo-Abyssinian conflict of 1868. The Amharic author is the *debtera* Zaneb; the style is good literary Amharic of the Nineteenth Century.

Among contemporary writers in Amharic we find Tayya, author of several acceptable works, such as, for example, a brief history of Abyssinia: *Ya' Ityopya hezb tarik*, published at Asinara in 1922. Afework has written—besides several minor works—a life of Menelik II, published at Rome in 1909, and also a romance: *Lebb wallad tarik*, a story of the early days of the victory of Christianity. Another writer, Heruy Walda Sellasie has to his credit three excellent works⁸ published in Addis Ababa as recently as from 1910 to 1922.

Thus we conclude that Amharic is a living, spoken language possessing a literature—religious and secular—developing progressively from the Middle Ages down to the present time.

IV. THE ETHIOPIC SYLLABARY

The Amharic letters are written in the antique alphabet, or more exactly, syllabary used in the Ethiopic or Ge'ez language, with the addition of seven special letters, or modifications of Ge'ez consonants employed for the purpose of expressing sounds not existing in the elder language. The Ge'ez syllabary was at first a true alphabet comprising characters representing only consonants. At the end of the 4th century modifications of the original letters were introduced in order to indicate the vowel sounds. The original consonantal form of each character was retained to express the given consonant with a short *a* vowel. There are 26 consonants. Each of these consonants is then modified in order to express one of the six other attendant, following vowels: *u*, *i*, *a*, *e*, *i*, (*e*) *o*. The letters, or syllables, are arranged in seven columns, each column showing the letter with its proper vocalic sign. Letters in the first column show no modification (for the vowel *a*). The vowel *u* is, in general, indicated by placing a small horizontal stroke extending from the middle of the right side, or arm, of the letter; the vowel *i* is indicated by a similar stroke at the lowest part of the right side, or arm: long *a* is indicated by an extension of the right side of the letter lower than the left side, a phenomenon accomplished by shortening the left side or arm of the letter. The sign of long *e* is a small circle attached at the lower right side. In the sixth row where the vowel in Ethiopic is short *e* (short *i* in Amharic) the alteration is achieved by distorting, or sloping the letter slightly, on the left side. This character also represents the consonant, in each instance, when used without a following vowel. The last of the seven vowel modifi-

⁸Ityop'anna Matamma, Ya' ase Yohannes tarik; Yalegso zêmâ getem; Ba' ityopya yammigaññu yamasheft qutr.

cations is that for long *o* which is made by attaching a small circle at the upper right hand side or area of the letter, close to the top; or by a shortening of the right side or arm of the letter.

The description here given is, in general, the method employed, but there are exceptional modifications of some individual letters due to the necessity of avoiding certain ambiguities and duplication. In addition to these 182 forms, there are four modifications of: *q*, *b*, *k*, and *g*, when immediately followed by the *u* sound as heard in such English words as: quake, queen, quince, or the sound of *w* in the Anglo-Saxon: hwaet, hwon, etc. Naturally there is no form with *u* also as vowel; nor is there a set of modifications for *o* following *u* (*w*).

The seven additional consonants necessarily employed in Amharic are: sha, cha, nnya, ja, zha, kha, scha.⁹ The modifications for these consonants are quite consistently made by an addition of a horizontal line added directly to the top of the letter, accompanied by the respective vowel indications.

While in Ge'ez the consonant without vowel, also is employed to indicate that consonant with the sound *e*, so in Amharic this attendant vowel sound is *i*.

This syllabary is perfectly phonetic and can be trans-literated into corresponding English sounds without too much difficulty. There is no way, apparently, of indicating the doubling of consonants. Hebrew and Arabic are able to show double consonants by the *dagbesh forte*, and the *teshdid*, respectively, but in Ethiopic this phenomenon can be learned only through practice, and by knowing that certain assimilations produce double letters. It may be noted in passing that the second radical of all verbs in the Ethiopic "intensive" is doubled; while in Amharic, all trilateral verbs have the middle radical doubled, even in the "primitive" or simple" form of conjugation.¹⁰

V. THE AMHARIC VERB

In the Semitic languages, the verb, in the vast majority of examples, consists of a tri-literal (consonantal) stem in which the various nuances required to express tense, voice, mood are achieved by modification of vowels, accompanied by shifting accent, addition of prefixes or suffixes, while the original three consonants of the stem remain, for the most part, unaltered. So we find in Hebrew: *qatal*; in Arabic: *fa'ala*; in Ethiopic: *gabera*, examples of verb stems containing the prevailingly characteristic three consonants. Some verb

⁹The sounds are usually named in this manner with short vowel *a* following.

¹⁰In Marcel Cohen's splendid work: *Traité de langue amharique*, p. 26, sec. 16, he notes that many Abyssinian grammarians now indicate the gemination of consonants—at least for purposes of instruction—by placing two small dots above the consonant doubled. Cohen employs this method, also, throughout his work.

stems have four consonants; others, also, show peculiarities of inflection due to the type or class of consonants employed, or to the doubling of a consonant.

The phenomena just outlined occur also in Amharic. The other distinctive feature of the Semitic verb (especially Arabic and Ethiopic) is that of the derivative conjugations. This consists in making from any particular verb, in its simple or radical form, as a base, a number of new modifications expressing the verb in various states or relationships. The chief derivative conjugations in the Ethiopic group are the *Intensive and Frequentative* (indicating the state, or participation of the subject in the thought expressed by the verb) and the *Causative and Reflexive* (serving to show the thought of the verb in its relation to an outside object).

a) Framework of the Verb in Ge'ez

In Ge'ez the derivative conjugations may be presented in framework as follows:

We shall use the verb: *qatala*, to kill, exhibiting the Perfect Tense only:

PERFECT			
	<i>Simple</i>	<i>Intensive</i>	<i>Frequentative</i>
I <i>Radical</i>	<i>qatala</i> (he killed)	<i>qattala</i> (he killed with violence)	<i>qâtala</i> (he was wont to kill)
II <i>Causative</i>	<i>aq'tala</i> (he caused to kill)	<i>aqattala</i> (he caused to kill violently)	<i>aqâtala</i> (he was accus- tomed to cause to kill)
III <i>Reflexive</i> (Passive)	<i>taqat'la</i> (he killed himself; or was killed)	<i>taqattala</i> (he was killed with violence)	<i>taqâtala</i> (he was killed among others)
IV <i>Causative-Reflexive</i>	<i>astaq'tala</i> (he caused himself to be killed)	<i>astaqattala</i> (the same, with violence)	<i>astaqâtala</i> (the same, in company with others)

From a study of the foregoing plan, one can perceive: 1) that the *Simple* form contains the original tri-consonantal stem 2) the *Intensive* is made by doubling the second radical 3) the *Frequentative*, by lengthening the first vowel. Adding to our examination the indications of the more embracing classifications: *Causative*, *Reflexive* (*Passive*) and *Causative-Reflexive*, we find: 1) the *Causative* is made by prefixing the vowel *a* 2) the *Reflexive*, by adding the prefix *ta* 3) the *Caus-Reflex.* by the prefix *asta*. Some divergences occur: 1) in the *Causative Simple*, the first vowel of the original stem is suppressed

2) in the *Reflexive Simple*, the second vowel is omitted 3) in the *Causative-Reflexive* again the first vowel of the original stem disappears.

All of the forms shown in the framework given above do not occur in every verb—perhaps not in any one verb. The most infrequent of occurrence are the *Intensive* forms as a whole, the *Simple Caus.*, *Reflex.*, and the first two *Frequentatives*.

b) *The Amharic Derivative Conjugations*

Before treating of the Amharic verb, *per se*, it would be well to repeat, and enhance, a statement made on p. 12: In the Amharic, all the trilateral verbs (except some that have a guttural in the middle position in the radical stem, as, for example, a medial *ua* or *ya*.) in the *Perfect* in all instances, and a few (such as *jammara* to commence, and *tschallasa*, to finish) also in the *Imperfect*, *Jussive*, *Infinite*, *Participle* and *Gerundive*, have the middle (second) consonant of the radical stem reduplicated. This particular rule, then, militates against the possibility of making the *Intensive* stem merely by reduplication. To obviate this apparent anomaly, the Amharic—which combines the *Intensive* and *Frequentative* conjugations—repeats the second radical consonant, but interpolates the vowel long *a* immediately preceding the reduplication. Thus: for the verb *sabbara*, to break, we form the *Intensive-Frequentative* *sabbábbara*,¹¹ to break into many pieces.

To form the *Causative* the preponent *a* is employed, or, in some examples, as explained below, *as* is the prefix. So, the *Causative* of *jammara*, to commence, is *asjammara*, to cause to begin. Apparently the prefix *a* is employed for verbs like *baqqala*, to sprout, which reduplicate the second radical in the *Perfect* only, while the prefix *as* appears for verbs like *jammara*, having the reduplication throughout the entire system. The rule is, however, not too strictly observed; some verbs exhibit both usages.

To indicate the *Reflexive-Passive*, the portion *ta* is prefixed, much more rarely *an* and *tan*. Examples: from *sabbara*, *tasabbara*; from *barakka*,¹² *tambarakka*, he knelt, (the *n* being assimilated to *m* before *b*). from *qaddala*, to kill, *taqaddala*, he was killed, illustrating here the passive significance of this derivative conjugation. The formation with *an* or *tan* is used especially in verbs which have more than three letters in the original stem. Thus, from an unused radical: *talattala* to suspend, we make *antalattala* for the *Reflexive*.

Furthermore, the Amharic recognizes an *Intensive* derivative for both the *Causative* and the *Reflexive*. We make then: *sabbábbara*, to break into many pieces; *tasabábbara*, to break one's self into many

¹¹The *b* is aspirated to *bh* before the long vowel.

¹²This verb is regarded as having a quadriliteral stem, in which the third radical is reduplicated instead of the second.

pieces. *assabhābbara*,¹³ to cause to break into many pieces (*an* before *s* is assimilated to *as*). Also this Reflexive-Passive of the Intensive has the force of a Reciprocal. Thus a complete listing of the derivative conjugations of the Amharic verb would include: 1) Intensive-Frequentative, 2) Causative, 3) Reflexive-Passive, 4) Reciprocal, 5) Causative of the Reciprocal, 6) Causative of the Intensive-Frequentative and 7) Reflexive-Passive of the Intensive-Frequentative. Needless to say, probably no verb in the language has exhibited, in the literature, all of these complicated derivatives.

c) *Tenses and Moods*

The Amharic has the two tenses only which are characteristic of the Semitic verb in general: 1) the perfect and 2) the imperfect. The Perfect denotes an action completed (usually in past time), the Imperfect denotes an action incomplete, and with reference to no particular time. Therefore, since the Imperfect expresses an act incomplete at any time, it may refer to an act going on in the present, or not yet begun; hence the Imperfect often represents present time, and again, future time. The salient difference between these tenses in the Semite mind is one of duration rather than of time, one of completion or immediacy, in contrast with non-completion.¹⁴ We translate the Perfect as past, and the Imperfect as either present or future. The inflection of the Perfect is accomplished by means of suffixes mostly pronominal in origin. There are particular suffixes for the following persons: third person feminine singular, second masculine, second feminine, and first person common gender. In the plural, the third person is common gender, likewise the second person, and also the first person. The third person masculine singular, to which no suffix is joined, stands as the stem or radical form of the verb. So the verb, to speak, is *naggara*, literally: he spoke.

The Imperfect takes, in some personal forms, a preformative; in others, both a preformative and a pronominal suffix. It shows the same distribution of forms of particular genders as in the Perfect.

Differing again from Ge'ez, the Amharic has two types of Perfect and Imperfect respectively. The type just described is the Simple; the one now to be explained is the Compound, or Composite. The latter is made—for the Imperfect—by combining the Perfect of the irregular verb: *alla*, to be, with the usual forms of the Simple Imperfect, the proper personal form of *alla* being added to the forms of the Imperfect of a given verb. The addition is negotiated with some euphonic assimilations. The Composite Perfect is made by combining with the gerund of a given verb the auxiliary verb, *alla*. The personal endings are added to the gerund, and then there is affixed

¹³This Causative-Intensive also has joined in it the idea of aiding in doing something. So here: *assabhābbara*, he aided in breaking.

¹⁴Similar to the Russian perfective and imperfective.

the auxiliary: *-all*. This Composite Perfect expresses our own perfect tense. Thus: *gadla-kb-all* means thou hast killed. The portion *gadla* represents the gerund of the verb: *gaddala*; *kb* is the personal ending of the second person singular; *all* is the abbreviated form of *alla*, to be. The uses of both composite tenses will be described later.

Let us now display the paradigms of these forms using the verb: *naggara*, to speak:

		Singular			
		SIMPLE PERFECT		COMPOSITE PERFECT	
3	m.	<i>naggara</i> , he said		<i>nagro'all</i> , he has said	
	f.	<i>naggarac</i>		<i>nagrállac</i>	
2	m.	<i>naggarb</i>		<i>nagrabáll</i>	
	f.	<i>naggarš</i>		<i>nagrašáll</i>	
1	m.f.	<i>naggarbu</i>		<i>nag'rryállabu</i>	
		Plural			
3	m.f.	<i>naggaru</i>		<i>nagrauáll</i>	
2	m.f.	<i>naggaracchu</i>		<i>naggráčchuáll</i>	
1	m.f.	<i>naggarna</i>		<i>nagranáll</i>	
		we said		we have said	
		Singular			
		SIMPLE IMPERFECT		COMPOSITE IMPERFECT	
3	m.	<i>inager</i> ¹⁵		<i>inagráll</i>	
		he is speaking		he speaks	
	f.	<i>tenager</i>		<i>tenagrállac</i>	
2	m.	<i>tenager</i>		<i>tenagrállab</i>	
	f.	<i>tenagri</i>		<i>tenagryállas</i>	
1	m.f.	<i>enager</i>		<i>enagrállabu</i>	
		Plural			
3	m.f.	<i>inagru</i>		<i>inagrallu</i>	
2	m.f.	<i>tenagru</i>		they speak	
1	m.f.	<i>enn'nager</i>		<i>tenagralláč'bu</i>	
		we are speaking		<i>enn'nagrállan</i>	
		we shall speak		we speak	

For expressing the *negative* use of a verb the Amharic places the prefix *'al* (similar to Hebrew: *'al*) before the verb form, and follows this form with the enclitic *-m*. So: *'alnaggaram*, he did not speak. Sometimes the negative suffix is joined to some other word in the sentence instead of the verb: *andem sawe alnabbara*, there was no man there. The preformative: *'al* assimilates euphonically the *l* with the preformatives: *t*, and *n* and before the preformative *y*, it introduces the palatal sound of English *y*. Thus: *'attengrem*, thou sayest not; *'annenag'rem*, we say not; *ay'nagrem*, for *alinagrem*, from *alyenagrem*, he does not say.

¹⁵Initial *ya* in the Imperfect is equivalent to long *i* - pron. *ee* English.

The Simple Imperfect when used negatively has usually the force of the Indicative mood; but with certain introductory particles it appears to partake of our Subjunctive. So: *enday'nager*, providing he does not speak. This use passes over to the affirmative of the imperfect where we find: *inager zand*, provided that he speaks.

At this point we shall show the paradigm of the irregular verb: *alla*, to be.

SINGULAR	PLURAL
3 m. <i>all</i> (for <i>alla</i>)	3 m.f. <i>allu</i> , (or, <i>all</i>)
f. <i>allac</i>	
2 m. <i>allah</i>	2 m.f. <i>allacc'bu</i>
f. <i>allaš</i>	
1 m.f. <i>allahu</i>	1 m.f. <i>allan</i> (or, <i>allana</i>)

As noted above (p. 16) these forms are joined directly to the corresponding forms of the Simple Imperfect to form the Composite Imperfect.

Tenses seeming to have the force or sense of our imperfect and pluperfect are achieved in Amharic, 1) by uniting respectively the Simple Imperfect with the portion: *nabbara* (to express a continued past action) and 2) by means of the gerund—for the affirmative construction—and the perfect (simple)—for the negative construction followed by *nabbara*. Thus: he was saying is: *inager nabbara*, he had said: *nagro nabbara*; he had not said: *'alnaggaram nabbara*.

So much for the Indicative Mood, the mood of assertion. Let us now examine the Jussive, the mood of exhortation. In the Jussive the first radical consonant of the verb loses its vocalism, and the second radical takes the vowel *a*. Thus: from *naggara* we make *yen'gar*, let him speak; *ten'gar*, let her speak; *en'gar*, let me speak; *yen'garu*, let them speak; *ennen'gar*, let us speak. The negative of the Jussive takes the preformative, *al*, but not the enclitic, *-m*. So: *attengar*, let her not speak. The second person, naturally wanting in the Jussive, is supplied by the Imperative which is thus closely associated with the Jussive, being the mood of command given directly in the second person. The Imperative forms are: *negar* speak thou (masc.) *negari*, speak thou (fem.) *negaru*, speak ye. Verbs having a doubled second radical in both the Imperfect and the Imperative—such as: *jammara*. . . retain the vowel *a* after the first radical and have the vowel *i* (e) after the second radical. Thus: *ijammer*, that he may commence; *gammer*, commence!

The Amharic Infinitive is formed by prefixing *ma* to the form which serves as the original verb stem, the third masculine singular of the perfect, but discarding the final vowel; and, if the verb has the second radical reduplicated only in the perfect, the vowel of the first radical is also omitted. Thus, from *gaddala*, to kill (Ethiopic, *qatala*) we form the infinitive. *mag'dal*, the act of killing. If the second radical is doubled throughout the verb system, as in *jammara*, the vowel

a is retained and we find: *mag'ammer* as the proper infinitive, the act of commencing.

As the Infinitive is a verbal noun, so the Gerund partakes as much of the character of a noun as of a verb. Its formation is simple; it has the vowel *a* after the first and after the third radical with suppression of the other intermediate vowel, yielding thus the stem form, *gabra*,—for example, to which are joined the personal pronominal suffixes. Thus for the verb: *gaddala* we have: *gadlo* (for *gadla-u*) 3 m.s.

<i>gadlá</i>	3 f.s.	she killing or her killing
<i>gadlah</i>	2 m.s.	
<i>gadlaš</i>	2 f. s.	
<i>gadiyye</i>	1 m. .f s.	(by palatisation from <i>gadl-e</i>)
<i>gadlau</i>	3 mf. p.	
<i>gadlán</i>	1 m. f. p.	

This gerund is practically a noun in the accusative of time, or of condition. With the gerund followed by the proper nominal suffix and the auxiliary verb, there is formed the Composite Perfect, used only in the affirmative of a given verb. (See p. 15). Also the gerund followed by *nabbara* forms a tense with the force of the pluperfect.

For expressing the Participles there are in use the forms: for example, *gabari* for the active. and *gibbâri* for the passive. The latter is very rarely found. Some examples: from *fattara* to create, *fatâri*, the one creating; from *sabbara* to break, *sibbâri*, broken; from *gammusa*, to cut a slice of bread, *gimmâs* half a loaf of bread; from *gaddala* to kill, *giddây*, the one killed. This last example corresponds more to a substantive than to a participle. We find, further, forms with the relative pronoun, *ya* attached forming in reality a phrase. So: *yagadala* that one who has killed, similar in meaning, to an aorist active participle in Greek; while *yammigadel*¹⁶ (formed with the simple imperfect) would mean that one who is killing (present participle). The negative with the participle takes only the preformative, *al*, not the enclitic *-m*. For example: *yâmatâtâu saue*, the man who has not come.

We have thus completed our survey of the simple verb.

d) *Verbs of more than three radicals*

Verbs having more than three radical consonants in the Ethiopic languages follow the analogy of the triliterals. So in the Amharic we find such verbs as *lampallama*¹⁷ to become green, forming its

¹⁶The relative pronoun, *ya* takes the form: *yamm* before the forms of the imperfect.

¹⁷The quadriliterals reduplicate the third radical in the Perfect and Imperfect.

omperfect *ilamallemlál*. In the intensive-frequentative the penultimate radical is reduplicated, for example, from *galabbata* we make *galab-bábbata* to upset violently; or, the second radical vowel is lengthened and we have; *galâbbata*. In the causative and the reflexive of verbs with five radicals,¹⁸ the first remains without vocalism. So, from an assumed form: *qabazzabaza* one makes: *aq'bazzabaza*, and *taq'bazzabaza*. The paradigm of the Perfect and Imperfect of a quadriliteral verb is now presented:

SIMPLE PERFECT 3 m.s. <i>lamallama</i> to become green f. <i>lamallamac</i> 2 m.s. <i>lamallamâh</i> etc.	COMPOSITE PERFECT <i>lamlemo'all</i> <i>lamlemállac</i> <i>lamlemakbáll</i> etc.
SIMPLE IMPERFECT 3 m.s. <i>ilamalleml</i>, he will become green f. <i>telamalleml</i> 2 m.s. <i>telamalleml</i> etc.	COMPOSITE IMPERFECT <i>ilamallemláll</i> <i>telamallemlállac</i> <i>telamallemlállah</i> etc.
JUSSIVE 3 m. <i>ilamlem</i> 3 f. <i>telamlem</i> etc.	IMPERATIVE <i>lamlem</i> etc.
INFINITIVE <i>malamlam</i> the act of becoming green	GERUND <i>lamlemo</i> etc. PARTICIPLE <i>lamlâmî</i>

e) Conjugation of the Derivative Verbs

The three chief derivative verbs are: 1) Intensive-Frequentative, 2) Causative, and 3) Reflexive-Passive. These are conjugated like the simple verb, as to the personal endings, and carry through naturally, the requirements of the various derivative states, with a few changes due largely to assimilation for the sake of euphony. These will be indicated as far as possible in the paradigm following, which is arranged in the form of a verb-synopsis:

Employing the verb: *naggara*, let us examine first the *Intensive-Frequentative*:

¹⁸These are not found in use, in the basic form.

Perfect (Simple)	3 m.s.	<i>nagággara</i> f. <i>nagággarac</i> 2 m. <i>nagággarkh</i> f. <i>nagággarš</i> , etc.
Perfect (Comp.)	3 m.	<i>nagagro'áll</i> , etc.
Imperf. (Simple)	3 m.s.	<i>īnagágger</i> f. <i>tenagágger</i>
Imperf. (Comp.)	3 m.	<i>īnagággeráll</i> f. <i>tenagággerállac</i>
Jussive (Sing.)	3 m.	<i>īnagáger</i> f. <i>tenagáger</i>
Imperative (Sing.)	2 m.	<i>nagáger</i>
Infinitive		<i>managágar</i>
Gerund	3 m.	<i>nagágro</i>
Participle (Act.)		<i>nagágârī</i>

The Causative of *naggara* follows:

Perfect (Simple)	3 m.s.	<i>anaggara</i> , or, <i>asnaggara</i> f. <i>anaggarac</i> <i>asnaggarac</i> 2 m. <i>anaggarkh</i> (-h) f. <i>anaggarš</i>
Perf. (Comp.)	3 m.	<i>angero'áll</i> , etc.
Imperf. (Simple)	3 m.s.	<i>yánager</i> or <i>yasnagger</i> f. <i>tánager</i> , etc.
Imperf. (Comp.)	3 m.s.	<i>yánagráll</i> f. <i>tánagrallac</i> , etc.
Jussive	3 m.s.	<i>yánger</i> or <i>yásnagger</i> f. <i>tánger</i>
Imperative	2 m.s.	<i>anger</i> , or <i>asnagger</i>
Infinitive		<i>mánger</i> , or <i>masnagger</i>
Gerund	3 m.	<i>anegro</i> , or <i>asnaggero</i>
Participle (Act.)		<i>angâri</i> , or <i>asnaggâri</i>

Reflexive-Passive of *naggara*

Perfect (Simple)	3 m.s.	<i>tanaggara</i> f. <i>tanaggarac</i> 2 m. <i>tanaggarakh</i> (-h) f. <i>tanaggarš</i> , etc.
Perfect (Comp.)	3 m.	<i>tanagro'áll</i> , etc.
Imperf. (Simple)	3 m.s.	<i>innaggar</i> f. <i>tennaggar</i> , etc.
Imperf. (Comp.)	3 m.s.	<i>innaggaráll</i> f. <i>tennaggarallac</i> , etc.
Jussive	3 m.s.	<i>īnnagar</i> f. <i>tennaggarallac</i> , etc.
Imperative	2 m.s.	<i>tanagar</i>
Infinitive		<i>mannagar</i>
Gerund	3 m.	<i>tanagro</i>
Participle		<i>tanagârī</i>

It is seen from the fore-going tables that the formation of each derivative conjugation is perfectly regular. The three exhibited are the important "derivatives", and most frequently employed. The other four derivative conjugations more rarely used are: 1) reciprocal 2) causative of the reciprocal 3) causative of the intensive-frequentative, and 4) reflexive-passive of the intensive-frequentative. In each of these, the tenses, and moods are the same and the respective suffixes denoting the pronouns are identically formed and added, together with the significant signs of the derivative in question. Thus we find some very extended forms, such as: *tánnagággerállac*, the second person feminine singular of the composite imperfect of the causative of the intensive-frequentative. The corresponding form for the reflexive-passive of the intensive-frequentative differs only in having the vowel *e* instead of *a* in the initial syllable.

It remains for us now to examine the so-called irregular verbs, typical of the Semitic languages.

f) *Irregular Verbs in Amharic: Gutturals, WA and YA*

The irregular verb emanates most often from a verb of three radicals one of which is suppressed while the other two abide. There are three types of radical which are generally suppressed: 1) a guttural, as for example: *kâda*, to deny, for **kahada*.¹⁰ *malâ*, to be full, for **malâ'a*; 2) a *wa*, such as *hona* to be, for *hawana*; *satta* to give, for *sattawa*; 3) a *ya*, such as *heda* to go, for *hayada*, *šâra* to heal, for *šaraya*.* The suppressed portions may stand in second or third position in the radical form of the verb. If the guttural dropped was in the second radical of the verb, the stem has long *a* following the first radical, as seen in *kâda*, above. The Imperfect has the vowel *e* predominating; so, from *yekehed*, *yeked*, and in the Jussive, *yekâd* from *yekehad*. Such verbs, having lost their second radical, are unable to form Intensives by the usual method of reduplication of this syllable; they therefore form the desired derivative by doubling the first radical.

If the guttural which has been suppressed was in the third radical, it leaves also a long *a* (except in the gerund). For example: *sarâ* to labor, from a starred form, *saraha*; Imperf. *yesarâ*, Jussive, *ye'srâ*, let him labor; gerund: *sarto*. If the suppressed consonant was a *wa* in the second radical of the irregular verb, it takes, in the perfect, imperfect, and infinitive, *o*; in the jussive, imperative, and gerund, *u*. For example: *hona*, to be, from **hawana*. imperfect: *yehon*; infin. *mahon*, juss. *yehun*, imperat. *hun*, gerund, *huno*.

If the consonant suppressed was a palatal *ya* in the second radical, we find long *e* in the perfect, imperfect, and infinitive; in the jussive, imperative and gerund, *i*. So, from **hayada* we have *heda*, he went, imperf. *yehed*, infinitive, *mahed*, juss. *yehîd*, imperat. *hîd* and gerund *bîdo*. To form the intensive of verbs with medial *wa* or *ya*, the an-

¹⁰A starred form is one assumed on strictly philological grounds, although not appearing in the language.

alogy of verbs with medial guttural is followed, for example, the intensive-reflexive of *rota* is *taruaruata*; of *šetâ*, *tašăšâta* (for a starred form: *tašyăšyâta*.)

If the suppressed *wa* or *ya* was in the third radical of the verb, we must distinguish two classes: 1) those in which the *wa* or *ya* leaves long *a* in the perfect, imperfect, etc. Thus, *tarâ*, to be pure, from **taraya*; and 2) those verbs in which the *wa* and *ya* when removed, leave remaining, in the infinitive and in the perfect, an *a*, before terminations beginning with a consonant; but in the imperfect, jussive and imperative, leave no trace. So, *satta* to give from **sattawa*, first person singular: *sattahu*, have given; third sing. masc. imperfect: *îsat*; juss. *îst*.

g) Verbs of Double Medial YA

Verbs of double medial *ya* have analogous forms, as *layya*, imperf. *ilayy*. Both of these classes in the infinitive and gerund add a *t* at the end. Thus: *ma'rât*, to be pure. *tar'to* being pure; *ma'stat*, the giving; *sa'to*, he giving; *malayyat*, to distinguish.

Final *ya* is retained in some few verbs like *sallaya*, to pray or entreat, and also final *wa* in *tawa*, to leave. But the infinitive of the former is *masalt*. And the gerund of *tawa* changes *ta* to *t*, loses its *wa* and becomes *tito*, he leaving.

The verb **bâla* to speak, is irregular. In the Perfect and Imperfect it loses the *b*. Thus we have: *ala*, he said, *alac*, she said, *al-bu*, I have said, *yetâl*, he says, etc. Infinitive: *mâlat*, to say. On the other hand, the jussive, imperative, and gerund retain *b*. Thus we make: jussive, *yebal*, let him speak; imperative, *bal*, speak thou, gerund, *bilo*. Also in the reflexive-passive and in the intensive-frequentative the *b* is retained: *tabâbâla*, etc.

Besides the principal classes of irregular Amharic verbs already mentioned, there is a class—similar to the doubly weak verbs of Ethiopic—which have the second and third radicals identical. In these, the two letters not separated by a vowel, contract into one, in the imperfect, simple and composite, in the gerund, and in the composite perfect. For example: *saddada*, to send; simple imperfect, *yesad*, composite imperfect, *yesadâd*, gerund, *sadâ* composite perfect, *sado'âll*. In the simple perfect, the contraction does not occur, because the second radical is pronounced double. So also in the jussive we find: *yes'dad* and imperative, *sedadu* (*plur.*) where the two letters contracted into one are not preceded by vowels, except the shortest vowel sound: *i* (*e*).

h) COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE PRINCIPAL TYPES OF IRREGULAR VERBS

	PERFECT SIMPLE	SIMPLE	PERF. COMP.	IMPERF. SIMPLE	IMPERF. COMP.	JUSSIVE
Verbs with a medial guttural discarded	<i>kāda</i> <i>kadac</i> <i>kadeh</i> , etc.		<i>kād'wāll</i> <i>kādallac</i> etc.	<i>yeked</i> <i>teked</i> etc.	<i>yek'dāll</i> <i>tek'dāllac</i> etc.	<i>yekād</i> <i>tekād</i> etc.
Verbs with a final guttural discarded	<i>sarā</i> <i>sarac</i> <i>sarab</i> etc.	<i>saret'wāll</i> <i>saretāllac</i> etc.	<i>yes'rā</i> <i>tes'rā</i> etc.	<i>yēs'rāll</i> <i>tes'rāllac</i> etc.	<i>yēs'rā</i> <i>tes'rā</i> etc.	
Verbs with a medial <i>wa</i> discarded	<i>bona</i> <i>bonac</i> <i>boneb</i> etc.	<i>bun'wāll</i> <i>bunallac</i> etc.	<i>yebon</i> <i>tebon</i> etc.	<i>yebonāll</i> <i>tebonāllac</i> etc.	<i>yebon</i> <i>tebon</i> etc.	
Verbs with a medial <i>ya</i> discarded	<i>beda</i> <i>bedac</i> <i>bedeb</i> etc.	<i>bid'wāll</i> <i>bīdāllac</i> etc.	<i>yebed</i> <i>tebed</i> etc.	<i>yēsarrāll</i> <i>tesarrāllac</i> etc.	<i>yebūd</i> <i>tebūd</i> etc.	
Verbs with a final <i>wa</i> or <i>ya</i> discarded	1st <i>sarrā</i> class <i>sarrāc</i> <i>sarrāb</i> etc.	<i>sarret'wāll</i> <i>sarretallac</i> etc.	<i>yēsarrā</i> <i>tesarrā</i> etc.	<i>yēsarrāll</i> <i>tesarrāllac</i> etc.	<i>yēs'rā</i> <i>tes'rā</i> etc.	
	2nd <i>satta</i> class <i>sattab</i> <i>sattabu</i> etc.	<i>sat'tewāll</i> <i>sat'tāllac</i> etc.	<i>īsāt</i> <i>tesāt</i> etc.	<i>īsattāll</i> <i>tesattāllac</i> etc.	<i>īsāt</i> <i>tesāt</i> etc.	

The forms of the Imperative, Infinitive and Gerund of these verbs are respectively:

<i>kád,</i>	<i>makád,</i>	<i>kedo;</i>
<i>sará,</i>	<i>masráť,</i>	<i>sarto;</i>
<i>hun,</i>	<i>mahon,</i>	<i>huno;</i>
<i>híd,</i>	<i>mahed,</i>	<i>hído;</i>
<i>seru,</i>	<i>masráť,</i>	<i>sarto;</i>
<i>set,</i>	<i>mastat,</i>	<i>sa'to.</i>

It will be noticed, upon studying the plan here given, how consistently, in all particulars, the fixed patterns are followed.

i) VERBS WITH SUFFIXES

It remains for us now to exhibit the verb with suffixes. This is a phenomenon characteristic of the Semitic languages—especially in Hebrew and Ethiopic. It is found also in Basque, in the Caucasian languages, and in the Ural-Altaic languages, to some extent. The Amharic verbal suffixes are:

-ñ 1 m. f. s. me	<i>na -n</i> us (m. f.)
- <i>kh -h</i> 2 m. s. you (masc)	<i>ácchu</i> you (plur.)
- <i>ši š</i> 2 f. s. you (fem.)	
- <i>u -t</i> him	
- <i>at</i> her	<i>áccau</i> them (m. f.)

Examples of usage:

yegadd'lawi, simple imperfect

yegadd'lawáll, imperfect composite

he will kill him

yegaddel'hu

yegaddel'kháll

he will kill you

yegadd'lañ

yegadd'lañáll

he will kill me

gaddal's'wi thou (fem.) killest him; simple perfect

gaddalac'wi she killed him; simple perfect

VI THE GE'EZ VERB FOR COMPARISON

As we have shown in the table on p. 13, the Ge'ez verb has four principal stems in use: I) Radical II) Causative III) Reflexive, and IV) Causative-Reflexive. Categorized under these arrangements are the three principal aspects of the verb: 1) Simple 2) Intensive, and 3) Frequentative. Using the Roman numerals for the stems, and the Arabic to designate the aspects, we may refer to the respective derivative conjugations by means of these two kinds of numerals. So, I 3 will be a short way of expressing: Radical Frequentative; III 2 will indicate: Reflexive Intensive, and so forth.

The usual model verb employed in the grammars, *qatala* will be exhibited, first fully, in the Simple Radical form (I 1) and then in each of the derivative conjugations in synopsis. The Imperfect of I, will also be given in full. Ge'ez, differing here markedly from Amharic, has also the Subjunctive²⁰ in several of the verb aspects; this will be shown for the Simple Radical in full, and will be indicated in the synopses of the respective derivative conjugations.

a) The verb *qatala*, to kill, in the Simple Radical form:

PERFECT SINGULAR		PLURAL
3 m.	<i>qatala</i>	<i>qatalu</i>
3 f.	<i>qatalat</i>	<i>qatalâ</i>
2 m.	<i>qatalka</i>	<i>qatalkemma</i>
2 f.	<i>qatalki</i>	<i>qatalken</i>
1 common	<i>qatalku</i>	<i>qatalna</i>
IMPERFECT SINGULAR		
3 m.	<i>yeqatel</i>	<i>yeqatelu</i>
3 f.	<i>teqatel</i>	<i>yeqatelâ</i>
2 m.	<i>teqatel</i>	<i>teqatlu</i>
2 f.	<i>teqateli</i>	<i>teqatlå</i>
1 c.	<i>eqatel</i>	<i>neqatel</i>
SUBJUNCTIVE		
3 m.	<i>yeqtel</i>	<i>yeqtelu</i>
3 f.	<i>teqtel</i>	<i>yeqtelâ</i>
2 m.	<i>teqtel</i>	<i>teqtelu</i>
2 f.	<i>teqteli</i>	<i>teqtelâ</i>
1 c.	<i>eqtel</i>	<i>neqtel</i>
IMPERATIVE		
2 m.	<i>qetel</i>	<i>qetlu</i>
3 f.	<i>qatilâ</i>	<i>qetlå</i>
INFINITIVE		
	<i>qatil</i>	
GERUND		
3 m.	<i>qatilo</i> (when he kills, etc.)	<i>qatilommu</i>
3 f.	<i>qatilâ</i>	<i>qatilon</i>
2 m.	<i>qatilaka</i>	<i>qatilakemma</i>
2 f.	<i>qatilaki</i>	<i>qatilaken</i>
1 c.	<i>qatilya</i>	<i>qatilana</i> (when we kill)

²⁰Apparently replacing the Jussive; it is found only in the Imperfect Tense.

Intransitive Verbs show some syncopation in the Simple Form.
Thus: *labsa*, he was clothed:

PERFECT

labsa

labsat

labaska

labaski

labasku

labsu

labsā

labaskemmu

labasken

labasna

Imperf. *yelabes*, etc.

Subjunct. *yelbas*, etc.

Imperat. *lebas*, etc.

Infinit. *labis*

Gerund *labīso*

The derivative conjugations
of intransive verbs are
formed on the basis of the
transitive verbs.

(b) TENSES AND MOODS OF THE DERIVATIVE STEMS OF THE TRILITTERAL VERB

STEM	PERF.	IMPERF.	SUBJUNC.	IMPERAT.	INFIN.	GERUND
I 2	<i>qattala</i>	<i>yeqettel</i>	<i>yaqattel</i>	<i>qattel</i>	<i>qattelo</i>	<i>qatīlo</i>
I 3	<i>qātala</i>	<i>yeqātel</i>	<i>yeqātel</i>	<i>qātel</i>	<i>qātelo</i>	<i>qātīlo</i>
II 1	<i>aq'tala</i>	<i>yāq'atel</i>	<i>yāq'tel</i>	<i>aq'tel</i>	<i>aq'r'lo</i>	<i>aq'tīlo</i>
II 2	<i>aqattala</i>	<i>āqyettel</i>	<i>yāqattel</i>	<i>aqattel</i>	<i>aqat'lo</i>	<i>aqatīlo</i>
II 3	<i>aqātala</i>	<i>yāqātel</i>	<i>yāqātel</i>	<i>aqātel</i>	<i>aqāt'lo</i>	<i>aqātīlo</i>
III 1	<i>taqat'la</i>	<i>yetqatal</i>	<i>yetqatal</i>	<i>taqatal</i>	<i>taqat'lo</i>	<i>taqatīlo</i>
III 2	<i>taqattala</i>	<i>yetqettel</i>	<i>yetqattel</i>	<i>taqattel</i>	<i>taqat'lo</i>	<i>taqatīlo</i>
III 3	<i>taqātala</i>	<i>yetqātel</i>	<i>yet'qātel</i>	<i>taqātel</i>	<i>taqāt'lo</i>	<i>taqātīlo</i>
IV 1	<i>astaq'tala</i>	<i>yastaqetel</i>	<i>yastaq'tel</i>	<i>astaq'tel</i>	<i>astaq'telo</i>	<i>astaq'tīlo</i>
IV 2	<i>astaqattala</i>	<i>yastaqattel</i>	<i>yastaqattel</i>	<i>astaqattel</i>	<i>astaqattelo</i>	<i>astaqatīlo</i>
IV 3	<i>astaqātala</i>	<i>yastaqātel</i>	<i>yastaqātel</i>	<i>astaqātel</i>	<i>astaqātelo</i>	<i>astaqātīlo</i>

(c) THE WEAK AND GUTTURAL VERBS IN GE'EZ

There is a more extended array of weak and guttural verbs in the sister language: Ge'ez, than in Amharic. It resembles more closely the Hebrew in this respect, since we find as many as eight categories. Four of these are, par excellence, "weak" stems; while of the remaining four groups, one is the stem with double medial, the other three being the "guttural" verbs.

1) Let us examine the double medial verbs. These are the verbs in which the second radical is repeated, for example: *nababa*, to read. The synopsis of the Simple Root aspect is: *nababa* Imperf. *yenabeb*, Subjunctive *yenebeb*, Imperative *neber*, Infinitive *nabib*, Gerund *nabibo*. Displaying one of the derivative aspects of the double medial, we have: for the Reflexive-passive Frequentative: Perfect, *tanábaba*, *yet-nábab*, Subjunctive *yetnábab*, Imperat. *tanábab*, etc.

2) Verb stems with Initial Guttural show the Perfect, for example, *'amena*, to believe, Imperf. *ya'amen*, Subjunctive, *ye'eman*, Imperat. *'eman* Infinitive, *'amin*, Gerund, *'amino*. As an example of a derivative stem of this type of verb, we show: Reflexive-Passive Frequentative: Perfect, *ta'aman*, Imperf. *yet'áman*, Subjunc. *yet'áman*, *ta'áman*. In this scheme one notes several duplications.

3) The Medial Guttural verbs may be illustrated by *la'aka* to send, Perfect; *yel'ek*, Imperf. *yel'ak*, Subjunc. *la'ak*, Imperat. *la'ik*, Infin. *la'iko*, Gerund. In the Causative Intensive, we form: Perf. *'ala'aka*, Imperf. *yel'e'ek*, Subjunc. *yel'ek* Imperat. *'al'ek*.

4) Final Guttural. Here we may illustrate: Perf. *bas'ha* to arrive, Imperf. *yebaseh*, Subjunc. *yebśáh* Imperat. *besáh* Infin. *basih*, Gerundive *basibo*. For a derivative conjugation we give synopsis of the Causative Simple: Perfect, *'abeseh*, Imperf. *yábaseh*, Subjunc. *yábeseh* Imperat. *'ab'seh* Infin. *'abesin* Gerund *'ab'siho*.

This completes the three guttural classes.

We now turn to the "weak" verbs.

These are categorized as in Amharic: 1) Verbs having either the sound *wa* or that of *ya* initially; 2) having either of these sounds medially; 3) having a) *wa* final, or b) *ya* final. The first group here mentioned is called, Initially Weak. the second group, Medially Weak; the third group, Finally Weak. (There are also a few "Doubly Weak" in which two of the three radicals are either—or both—of these weak letters, *wa* and *ya*, such as *wadaya* to accuse, *dawaya*, to be ill, *hayawa* to live. There are, in addition, verbs whose radicals combine a guttural with one of the weak sounds: *wa'ala* to pass the day, *wage'a* to push, *wahaya* to surround.)

1) Initially Weak. Perfect, *wafara* to go into the field, Imperf. *yewafer*, Subjunc. *yewefes*, Imperat. *wefes*, Infin. *wafir*, Gerund. *wafiro*.

Caus. Reflex. Simple: Perf. *'asaawefara*, Imperf. *yâstawafer*, Subjunc. *yâstawefer*, Imperat. *'astawafer*, Infin. *'astawfir*, Gerund. *'astawefero*.

2) The Medially Weak verb may be illustrated by the verb *qoma* to arise, Imperf. *yeqawem*, Subjunc. *yequm*, Imperat. *qum*, Infin. *qawim*, Gerund. *qawimo*. Reflexive-Passive Frequentative: Perf. *taqâwama*, Imperf. *yetqâwam*, Subjunc. *yetqâwam*, Imperat. *taqâwam*, Infin. *taqawim*, Gerund. *taqawimo*.

3) Synopsis of a Finally Weak verb. Those whose final shows the consonant-syllable *wa* change that sound in some instances to the vowel *u*. These are called Class 1. Let us show the synopsis of the verb *talawa*, to follow: Imperfect, *yetalu*, Subjunc. *yet'lu* Imperat. *telu*, Infinitive *телиwe*, Gerund *taliwo*. Causative Frequentative: Perfect, *'atâlawâ*, Imperf. *yâtâlu*, Subjunc. *yâtâlu*, Impera. *'atâlu* Infinitive *atâliwe*, Gerund. *'atâliwo*.

The verbs of Class 2 can be illustrated by *saraya*, to pardon: Imperf. *yesari* (This shows how the final *ya* changes to long *i*, just as the final *wa* i saltered to *u*.) Subjunc. *yes'ri*, Imperat. *seri*, Infin. *sariy*, Gerund. *sariyo*, Causative-Reflexive Frequentative: *astasârâya*. Imperf. *astasâri*, Subjunc. *yastasâri*, Imperat. *'astasâri*, Infin. *'astasâriy*, Gerund. *'astasâriyo*.

Here, then, we take leave of our sketch of the Amharic Verb, in comparison with Ethiopic.

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